



**EN MASSE** OFFSPRING  
BITES 3

ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING



## P E R F O R M E R S

**Claire Edwardes** (percussion/Artistic Director)

**Jason Noble** (clarinets)

**Lamorna Nightingale** (flutes)

**Véronique Serret** (violin)

**Blair Harris** (cello tracks 1-3)

**Rowena McNeish** (cello track 4)

**Benjamin Kopp** (piano tracks 1-3)

**Zubin Kanga** (piano tracks 4, 5)

**Roland Peelman** (conductor tracks 1-3)

## A B O U T E N S E M B L E O F F S P R I N G & O F F S P R I N G B I T E S

Living new music has no greater champion than Sydney based Ensemble Offspring. A devotion to daring new music making has seen the group premiere more than three hundred new works over the course of twenty five years. Its programming shines a light on marginalised compositional voices including female and First Nations composers. Ensemble Offspring comprises some of Australia's most virtuosic and innovative performers including acclaimed percussionist Claire Edwardes, the group's Artistic Director. In 2019 Ensemble Offspring won the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award and was featured at Gaudeamus Muziekweek (Utrecht) touring to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Berlin, Glasgow and Dublin. The group has a dedicated following at its Sizzle Series at local bowling clubs and supports the next generation of Australian musicians and composers through Hatched Academy. Driven to promote artistic integrity while finding new ways to engage audiences with new music, Ensemble Offspring is committed holistically to the music of our time.

Launched in 2017, *Offspring Bites* celebrates the very best chamber works commissioned by Ensemble Offspring, through its Noisy Egg Creation Fund, recording them for release and pairing them with bespoke visual content. Composers featured in the series include Bree van Reyk, Andrea Keller, Juan-Felipe Waller, Tristan Coelho and Mary Finsterer. Featured video artists include Sam James, Oliver Miller, Rowena Crowe, Peter Humble and Su-An Ng. *Offspring Bites 3* features new video art by Cobie Orgers, Juan Withington and Andrew Morgan. All the Offspring Bites videos in the collection can be viewed at [vimeo.com/ensembleoffspring](https://vimeo.com/ensembleoffspring)

**[ensembleoffspring.com](https://ensembleoffspring.com)**

# EN MASSE

OFFSPRING  
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## ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

1-3.

**Alex Pozniak** – En Masse (2018) 10:45/11:09/10:13  
for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano

4.

**Holly Harrison** – bend/boogie/break (2018) 10:07  
for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, keyboard

5.

**Thomas Meadowcroft** – Medieval Rococo (2016) 12:51  
for alto flute, clarinet, percussion, keyboard, backing track

TOTAL LENGTH: 55:05

Watch Offspring Bites 3 films here:  
[vimeo.com/ensembleoffspring](https://vimeo.com/ensembleoffspring)

## Alex Pozniak – En Masse (2018)

for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano

**Alex Pozniak** studied composition at the University of Sydney, obtaining First Class Honours and the University Medal. He completed his Masters at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Matthew Hindson. Alex has had works performed by Sydney Symphony Fellows, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, The Song Company, Arditti Quartet (Europe), Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble L'Arsenale (Italy), Ensemble Offspring, Ensemble Besides (Belgium), Synergy Percussion and The Australia Piano Quartet. In 2011 Alex won the prestigious APRA Professional Development Classical Award, travelling to the US and Europe to present his works. He has taught composition since 2007 at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and a number of high schools, including Cranbrook School in Sydney where he is Teacher of Composition.

*En Masse* is Alex Pozniak's response to a commission by long-time supporter of the two, Charles Davidson for a substantial piece for the core sextet Ensemble Offspring line up of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion. The title refers to the idea of the ensemble working together in a unified mass and the musical ideas explore notions of mass or heaviness. It also stems from a reordering of the start of the word 'ensemble'. It is structured in 3 movements that follow each other continuously following a general 'fast-slow-fast' pattern (the first was written in 2016 and the latter two in 2018). The piano takes something of a central role throughout the piece with a focus on its rhythmic and resonant potential which is expanded by the other instruments. For example, through its synchronisation with drums or the other instruments generating overtones around it, as per the piece's opening gesture. It is music that indulges in synchronised, mechanical rhythmic ideas albeit within a continuous, flowing musical narrative, translating influences from the technologised sound-world of rock/metal music into an instrumental art music context.

In the first movement, the work's direct approach is evident in the exclamatory opening gesture: piano and drum attacks synchronised into an angular groove with the rest of the ensemble synthesising harmonic resonance from these attacks. In the 2nd movement, the drums are largely absent leaving the five pitched instruments to conjure a transcendent stillness with an underlying brooding that permeates the movement. A brief transition leads to the rhythmically charged third movement which takes the work's original attack as a staccato fragment around which lighter melodic threads are spun stemming back to the first movement's monumental style.

This is the sixth work written by Alex Pozniak for members of Ensemble Offspring, following the trio *Spike* in 2015, solo works *Surge* for marimba, *Mercurial* for cello, *Interventions* and *Crush* for solo piano and *Tower of Erosion* for piano and percussion. With thanks to Charles Davidson and Ensemble Offspring for the opportunity to create this piece.





**Holly Harrison – bend/boogie/break** (2018)  
for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, keyboard

**Holly Harrison** is an Australian composer from Western Sydney. Her music is driven by the nonsense literature of Lewis Carroll, embracing stylistic juxtapositions, the visceral energy of rock, and whimsical humour. She is the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's composer in residence across 2020 and 2021. Holly's music has been performed in Australia, Asia, Europe, and the US, by artists including four-time Grammy award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird, Alarm Will Sound, Australian Youth Orchestra, Orkest de Ereprijs, Goldmund Quartett, and Nu Deco Ensemble. Holly is composer in residence at MLC School, NSW, and plays drum kit in the improvised rock duo, Tabua-Harrison.

*Bend/Boogie/Break* describes the character of three recurring ideas across the work. *Bend* refers to the use of glissandi and pitch bends (particularly strings); *Boogie* refers to the underlying funk bass; and *Break*, as in, to break apart or a 'breakdown' section (perhaps a nod to metal rhythms!) Inspiration is drawn from post-rock, funk, and honky-tonk piano, as well as the overarching idea of warping vinyl and things 'going wrong' – perhaps bent out of shape, broken, or not quite right. This sextet for flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion and keyboard was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring in 2018 with assistance from donors Penny Le Couteur and Greg Dickson who sponsored three new works by Holly for Ensemble Offspring, this being the final one.

## Thomas Meadowcroft – Medieval Rococo (2016)

for alto flute, clarinet, percussion, keyboard, backing track

**Thomas Meadowcroft** is an Australian composer, resident in Berlin for many years, of international standing who makes orchestral and chamber music for the concert hall, as well as music for theatre and radio. His orchestral music has been performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the SWR Symphony Orchestra and the German Film Orchestra Babelsberg. In Australia his music has been championed by Speak Percussion. Along with examining cultural memory in early 21st century Australia, much of Meadowcroft's music addresses the political economy of music.

The title, *Medieval Rococo* is an oxymoron for our time: how is it possible to generate an abundance of wealth, ornamentation and redundancy on the back of an impoverished idea? The terms 'medieval' and 'rococo' are not used to reference periods of European art history but used in the populist sense of the words. 'Medieval' denotes music crude and backward, 'rococo' denotes music garish and arty. This work was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring for premiere at Sizzle 2016 and features alto flute, clarinet, percussion and keyboard (with a harpsichord sound) along with a minimal electronic backing track.



# CREDITS

Tracks 1-3 recorded at Studio 301 by Bob Scott

Track 4 recorded at Sydney Conservatorium of Music,  
Music Workshop by Bob Scott

Track 5 recorded at Eugene Goossens, ABC Centre Ultimo  
by producer Andre Shrimski and engineer Jason Blackwell

Mixed and mastered by Bob Scott

Cover and booklet design by Dale Harrison

Photography by Dale Harrison (front cover)

Keith Saunders (inside cover)

Anna Kamaralli (page 3)

Steve Broadbent (page 4)

Harry Schnitger (page 7)

# THANK YOU

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We work and play on Gadigal Land.